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ABSTRACT

Educational research in China has reflected the turmoil and political changes of that nation. Stating at the outset that education in China is insufficient for meeting the demands of modernization, the paper shows how failure to understand the role of educational research has contributed to this condition. An overview of educational research and political history of China provides a framework. The focus of this paper is primarily on the great debate on the problem of the essence of Chinese socialist education that occurred from 1978-86. Five different views emerged during the debate: (1) education serving the economic basis of society; (2) education of human beings with differing characteristics; (3) education as an element of systems engineering; (4) education as an instrument to transmit human experiences of social life and material production; and (5) education as human development. Out of this wealth of aims came clarification and strategy. The paper sets forth principles of Chinese socialist education. Ten features of education congruent with those principles are presented. Several important theoretical and practical questions about socialist education that are now being debated in China are reported and commented on. (MDE)

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A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF CHINESE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, ESPECIALLY THE RECENT GREAT DEBATE ON THE ESSENCE OF EDUCATION

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February 1987

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A Review of The State of Chinese Educational Research, Especially The Recent Great Debate on The Essence of Education

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Old China was both economically and educationally backward. Since the founding of New China, conditions have changed greatly. However, Owing to the past deterioration in many aspects as well as the mistakes in policy and political turmoil, China is now still a developing country, lagging far behand the most advanced countries of the world. Education in China today is insufficient for meeting the demands of modernization.

Recently, our government through its policy making agencies has increasingly recognized the importance of education, and more clearly understood the role of education in developing and enhancing popular intelligence. In other words, education is seen as the most important means for updating national economy and increasing production. The educational community has been summoned to study and summarize our past educational practice and experience, to continously update the level of educational theory, so as to serve better our socialist educational enterprise and our 'Four Modernizations', namely, The 'Modernization of Industry, Agriculture, Nation Defence, Science and Technology'.

Chinese educationists in the field of educational theory all over the country have responded actively by repeated activities in individual and group research and discussion of basic theoretical questions. The most far-reaching and influential event was 'The Great Debate' on the problem of essence of education, from the end of 1978 until today.

Such nation-wide debate usually takes place in the form of special discussion meetings, symposiums, local and national conferences as well as special issues of magazine articles or monographs. Almost all research institutes and organizations have participated.

This paper attemps to give a brief account of our research institutes and organizations and their work with a discription in detail of this debate. It will appear under the following headings: I. Present status of Chinese educational research agencies. II. Views of the essence of education as exposed primarily in the debate. III. How Chinese educationists view the essence of education today. IV. Most important theoretical and practical problems of education finally posed during the debate, demanding earnest inquiry and solution. V. A Brief analysis and comment on some theoretical and practical problems referred during the debate.

* CIER: Central Institute of Educational Research.

I. Present Status of Chinese Educational Research Agencies

Statistics of 1984 show that there are 101 educational research institutions of various levels and kinds including the CIER under the State Education Commission, 26 Provincial, municipal and autonomous reginal educational research institutes and departments, and 74 research institutes and departments in colleges and universities. 1 The CIER was planned in 1956 and formally founded in 1960. It was dismantled during 'The Culturel Revolution' and re-established in 1978. Now it has some 150 full-time research workers. It has the following divisions: 1) Educational Theory, 2) History of education, 3) Educational psychology, 4) Material and method of instruction, 5) Higher education, 6) School system, 7) School administration and management, 8) Early childhood education, 9) Adult and part-time education, 10) Modern educational technology, 11) Information and reference resources. Besides, there are the research library, editorial department of the magazine 'Educational Research' (monthly), the division of research planning, and the Educational Science Press. Its periodical publications include: 'Education Research' (monthly), 'Foreign Education' (bimonthly), and 'Education Digest' (semi-monthly). Some of the recent publications are: 'Handbook of Major Educational Events of the PRC, 1949-1983', 'A Research Report on China's Educational Policy', 'A Research Report on the Principles of Teaching', and 'A Survey of the Development of Educational Courses in Foreign countries', etc.. The institute is functioning under the mandate of the State Education Commission, but academically under the guidance of the China Academy of social Sciences. 2

The local educational research institutes and departments are established and guided by their respective provincial, municipal or autonomous regional educational authorities now known as Education Commissions. Besides, there are research institutes or departments established in higher normal colleges or universities, under the guidance of both the local governments and the colleges. These two types of research agencies all have their own full-time research staff working under their own short and long-term research plans. In recent years, all of them have taken an active part in educational research demanded by the needs of educational reform, and have published many periodicals and monographs. The provincial municipal and autonomous regional research agencies lay emphasis on solving practical problems for meeting urgent local needs.

There are three types of educational research agencies in higher education institutions. One type is independant of the departments of education and is directly under the guidance of the college dean or the university's president. The second type is established by the departments of education. The third type is established cooperatively by several agencies, assuming a general name, such as 'The Academy of Educational Sciences' of the East China Normal University. The main task of educational research in higher education institutions is to serve the needs of improving college instruction and training research workers, and contributes to the advancement or improvement of the content and methodology of teaching educational courses, through basic theoretical research.

The first national educational planning conference was held in 1979, passed a draft plan for the development of educational sciences and regulated the basic tasks and key topics of China's educational research during the years of the 6th Five-Year Plan.[3] Major research topics in theory include 'An Inquiry into the system of Marxist Educational Thoughts', 'A Study of the Relationships between education and polics, education and production, etc.', and 'Research in the theoretical and practical problems, facing the implementation of the New Educational Policy issued by the third plenary session of the Party's 11th Congress after the down fall of the 'Gang of Four'.[4]

The China Society for the Study of Education was organized in April 1979. Later societies for the study of education were also organized and have thrived in the provinces, cities and autonomous regions.[5] At present, such societies have been newly organized or restored in 28 provinces, cities and autonomous regions. Smaller educational reasearch societies are already founded in many local regions and smaller cities. Thus, research activities have spread widely. Since the founding of the China Society for the study of Education, more than 20 sub-societies for the study of the specialised areas, such as pedagogy, history of education, Marxist educational thought, comparative education, educational economics, educational sociology, language teaching in elementary and secondary schools, elementary and secondary school methods of teaching, early childhood education, history teaching, geograph teaching, mathematics teaching, physics teaching, Young Pioneers Counseling, etc., have been organized and thrived. All levels of research societies have cooperatively worked with various levels of governmental and college research institutes in formulating research plans, deciding upon required research projects, holding annual conferences, organizing symposiums or specialised discussion groups, giving academic lectures, and launching widespread scholarly exchange and research activities.[6]

According to He Dongchang, former minister of education, up to 1980 or so, there were altogether about 12,000 educational research workers, including part-time ones in China. Someone jokingly said that it was a 'trio of 12', ie. 120 in the CIER, 1200 in all educational research institutes of China, and 12,000, including the part-time ones altogether.[7] As a result of expanding and training, it is estimated that there are more than 20,000 now. They are making more and more contributions in the way of expanding research activities, making significant findings in solving theoretical problems, as well as in training a new generation of educational workers, in the service of realizing our 'Four Modernizations'.

II. Views of the Essence of Education as Exposed in The Great Debate.

As mentioned above, in recent years, the educational community in China has launched widespread discussions on the problem of the essence of education which we call 'The Great Debate'. The problems discussed include: 1) Correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought on Education. 2) Formulation of the Party's educational policy. 3) How to understand correctly the essence of education. 4) Theoretical problem of all-round development of human being. 5) Problems of human nature and alienation. 6) Problems of reforming educational system. 7) Relationship between education and society. 8) Relationship between education and economy. 9) Characteristics of teaching process. 10) Rectification of educational thinking, the problem of overcoming the one-sided 'college preparatory' of bias, etc..

The argumentation concerning the essence of education began in Oct. 1978 in Kaifeng, when professors of education in five normal colleges made for compiling a new testbook on education. In April 1979, at the conference on education and science planning in China, and also in June that year when the outline of the first new textbook on education was discussed, also in August at the first annual conference held by the China Society for the study of education, argumentation concerning this problem continued. Until the end of 1985, educational periodicals in China, including 'Educational Research Monthly' published more than 100 articles on this argumentation. The People's Educational Press has published a series of three books concerning it, 'On the Essence and Function of Education', 'On the Development of Education and National Economy', and 'Collections of Writings Concerning the Great Debate of the Essence of Education' etc.. All these publications have fully reflected the trend of thinking concerning this problem in Chins. 'After this debate, diversified views reached some agreement, but not all'.[8]

During this debate, the views expressed were under five headings: 1) Education is superstructure. 2) Only part of educational phenomena is superstructure. 3) Education is primarily a productive force. 4) Education is an instrument for the transmission of man's sociel experience. 5) Education is a process of the socialization of the individual.

First of all, please allow me to explain some of the unfamiliar terminologies.

According to Maxist political economy, 'superstructure' means the political legal system, and organizational set-up, built upon definite economic basis, as well as a corresponding social ideology, 'Economic basis' means the sum total of all aspects of relations of production, corresponding to a certain stage of the domi-

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nating productive forces. 'Productive forces' means man's ability to conquer and reshape nature, showing the relationship between mankind and nature, consisting of three elements, namely, labor force, labor resources and object of labor. 'Production relation' means different social relations, formed between human beings during the proceses of material production, reflecting the individual's relation to society, including three components, namely, the forms of ownership of production resources, man's role and mutual relations in the production process and forms of distribution of what is produced. According to Marxism, superstructure versus economic basis, and productive force versus production relations are the two fundamental contradictions causing man's social development and movement, the two sides of each pair of contradiction exist in an opposing and unifying relationship. For example, economic basis determines the superstructure, which in turn counteracts upon economic basis. Productive forces and production relations show the same mutual relationship.[9]

Now, let me briefly mention the main views expressed by Chinese educators during this debate. They are five as follows:

The first view of the essence of education deems that, education is unique social phenomenon of mankind, originates and develops according to the needs of a definite economic basis. It serves the economic basis and the development of productive forces by means of training human beings. Education originates with the needs of man's productive struggle and social life, and performs the task of inculcating man's ideological and moral qualities and transmitting knowledge and techniques. It belongs to catagory of social ideology, having common characteristics of superstructure within the whole social structure. The basic ingredients of education, such as educational thought, including aims, policy and viewpoint, the educant, content of education, principles of educational methodology, educational system and administration, etc., although many and diversified, yet the dominating and ruling ones are aims of education and educational policies, evidently belonging to the category of superstructure. Hence, it is maintained that the essence or characteristics of education is superstructure, determined by political economical needs of a definite society and conditioned by the degree of development of society's productive forces. In turn education can counteract upon the development of society's political economy and productive forces. However, the relation of education to the development of productive forces and the influence of productive forces upon education take place always through a definite economic basis. Both education and production exist within a definite social system, with definite forms of social organization, influenced and determined by definite social relations. 10

Those who hold the second view deem that, a considerable significant part of the ingredients of education such as educational thoughts, the educant, content and

corresponding principles and methods, educational system and administration, etc., are not superstructure. If the educant as a human being has his own social class traits, you can't ignore that part of his being belonging to nature, such as his physical and psychological age characteristics. With regard to the content of education and it's objectives and demands, moral training belongs to superstructure, but both intellectual training and physical culture are not all superstructure. Besides. many aspects of the means and organizations of instruction are also not superstructive, etc.. 11

The third view deems that, a very important essential property of modern education is no longer superstructure, but the element of productive forces. Education is already directly linked with productive forces. Furthermore, the element of modern productive forces is already developing and changing. Besides the three ingredients of labor force, labor resources and object of labor there are also the ingredients of science and technology, modern training and modernized scientific management, etc., of which the most invigorating one is the person equipped with science and technology and a subjective dynamic will power. Such persons exert a dominating impact upon the other elements of productive forces Modern education not only is the prerequisite of reproduction of labor force, but also directly or indirectly take part in the productive process, because education is closely combined with sciences and technology, and also closely related to the enhancement of labor productivity and the development of national economy. Consequently modern education has already become an independent element in the productive process. It is the new element of the modernized productive forces, that has now become a great 'system engineering' of man-power training. It is a system-engineering which includes the whole system from making plans, formulating measures to their final fulfilment, evidently possessing the features of production. 12

The fourth view deems that, education like language is an indispensible phenomenon in all social aspects, education as well as language develops and changes with the development and change of human society. Ever since the genesis of education, especially the emergence of schools, it has always existed as an instrument of transmitting knowledge, passing on thoughts and man's social experience. It has always been a social activity for nuturing and training human beings, including the inculcation of ideology and moral qualities. But the most dominating part of this activity as an instrument is to transmit man's experiences of social life and material production. 13

The fifth and last view is briefly like this: Education is an activity that transforms the natural being into a social one. It is a process of enabling the human being to grow up from childhood to adulthood and from immaturity to maturity, and to become gradually a member of human society. 14

From the contents of the voluminous literature of this Great Debate in recent years, one can see that education as superstructure is still dominating. But quite different from the debate in the early fifties, the recent tone of argument has changed evidently. The view of education as superstructure is no longer absolute and inviolable and other viewpoint are tolerated. All supplement and learn from each other. Those who hold different viewpoints also do not negate that of education as superstructure. I shall present a general comment and analysis of all the views and writings of this Great Debate in the last part of my paper.

III. How Chinese Educationists View the Essence of Education Today

Concerning the essence of education, Chinese educationists today have come to a general agreement in understanding and exposition: Education is a comprehensive phenomenon of upbringing, nurturing, training or forming the human being, and is closely linked with the development of society and mankind itself. In the last analysis, education means the process of forming the human person according to the needs of a definite society. The definition of education found in all Chinese textbooks and syllabuses on pedagogy is generally like this: In the broad sense education includes all the activities that enhance man's knowledge and skills, form and transform his thought and consciousness; in the narrow sense, education is a purposive planned and organized activity undertaken by the school for the educant. 15

What are the special features of 'socialist education with Chinese characteristics'? Since the founding of New China, Chinese educators have many times tried to answer this question, but no definite conclusion has been reached. It should be added that the situation has changed a great deal since this debate. There has been a much better understanding and clarification around the question. First of all, they deem that socialist education with Chinese characteristics must follow the following principles.

1) Socialist education in China should be directed by Marxism-leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. The younger generation should be educated with communist thought, communist world outlook and communist moral qualities and armed with advanced scientific knowledge. Theory should be combined with practice and education should be combined with productive labor. The educant should be trained to be an all-round new human being, both 'red and expert', gradually combining manual labor with brain labor and morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically well developed, with love for and skills in labor.

2) Socialist education should be adjusted to the development of socialist economy. Consciously based upon the needs of the development of socialist economy, socialist education should be developed in a planned way and proportionally to adjust its own structure and procedure, so as to increasingly perfect itself.

3) Socialist education should be based upon the equality of minorities. All enjoy the equality of educational opportunity. It is against the interference of

religion in the popular education.

4) Socialist education should insist upon the 'Four Cardinal Principles', namely, sticking to socialist road, sticking to Party's leadership, sticking to people's democratic dictatorship and sticking to Marxism-leninism and Mao Zedong thought.

It has been more than thirty years since the founding of New China. Owing to the mistakes in policy, especially during the 'Cultural Revolution', socialist education has suffered from some setback, so that it has not fully realized its own superiority under mormal conditions of development, however, as a general trend, it has expanded and progressed unprecedentedly. For example, in old China, the educational enterprises were quite backward. In 1949, there were only 205 colleges and universities with only 117,000 students, 5,892 secondary schools with1,268,000 students, and 289,000 elementary schools with 23,680,000 pupils. Before liberation, there were only 20% of the children of school age enrolled, and 80% of the population were illiterates. 16 Now, the status of our educational enterprises has changed greatly. Of the one billion people in China, 210,000,000 are enrolled in schools of all levels and catagories according to the recent statistical report of the government. There are 1016 or so colleges and universities with more than 1,700,000 students, which is 14 times that of 1949. In 1978, we started to enroll graduate students and now more than 87,331 graduate students have been trained by 388 higher education institutions, there are 93,221 secondary schools with 47,059,600 students, 37 times that of 1949. We have more than 920,000 elementary schools with 133,700,000 or so puples, which is 4.5 times that of 1949. The enrollment of children of school age now has reached 96% etc.. Besides, the total number of teachers and staff members in schools of various types and levels reaches more than 12,450,000, which is 12 times that of 1949. 17 These figures show clearly that our education enterprises have expanded and developed greatly since the founding of New China. It should be added that such a level of development has played a very important role in upgrating scientific and cultural level of the entire nation and hastening the upbuilding of socialist spiritual and material civilization. We are now gradually and steadily following a correct route in building a system of socialist education with Chinese characteristics.

According to the above principles, they deem that our education should embody the following features.

1. It should serve the needs of the 'Open Door' and 'Reform' policy as our government has shifted its focus of work to economic reconstruction.

2. It should be the activity of training manpower under the guidance of communist thoughts. It should give priority to a firm and correct political orientation, and emphasize ideological and political instruction.

3. It should insist upon carrying out the educational policy of training labor-

er with socialist consciousness and culture. All educants should receive instruction in high ideals, moral instruction, discipline and legal instruction, instruction in 'Five Loves', namely 'love of one's fatherland, love of the people, love of labor, love of the collective and love of public property'. They should receive instruction in patriotism, internationalism, collectivism and communism; instruction in dialectic materialism and historical materialism. They should oppose 'bourgeois liberalization' and all kinds of feudal rotten thoughts. By means of such education, we may bring up a vast army of working class intellectuals and laborers, armed with advanced science and technology and with a high level of culture.

4. The whole system of Chinese socialist education wishes to make the combination of education with productive labor as a basic means for bringing up a new kind of human being who can combine theory with practice and unify learning and doing, and as a chief measure for the gradual elimination of the difference between brain labor and manual labor. This system demands all kinds and levels of schools to carry out this principle and to enable the content of instruction to reflect the latest achievements of modern science and technology. Education and instruction should be conducive to adjusting the educant to his future career or vocation.

5. Socialist education should proceed from the realities or the actual conditions of China, such as a huge territory and abundant natural resources, a vast population, and a backward starting-basis for both education and economy; uneven development of economy and culture in different regions of the country, etc., so education should gradually & proportionally expand and develop in a planned way.

6. Such a system of education should be run both by the state and populace dually. It demands the combination of diversity with uniformity, and

takes the mass route, giving full play to popular initiative in all sectors of society.

7. Socialist education is carried on under the prerequisite of complying with the laws of physicological and psychological development of the educants, endeavoring to reap ever better educative effects, which it should achieve. This demands the educator or teacher to understand fully the educant, unifying his subjective understanding and the demands of objective reality, so that 'Both the Educator and Educant can Learn from Each Other and Grow Together'. Such a system of education should pay attention to the importance of teacher's training, attracting and recruiting the highly talented intellectuals to the teaching profession.

8. Socialist education must increase it's financial support by all means, increasing the share of educational budget, continuously improving the conditions of school facilities, emphasizing capital construction, teaching equipments and laboratories, apparatuses, libraries, studyhalls, gymnasiums and play grounds, and increasingly equipped with modern educational technology.

9. Socialist education is an activity continuously reforming and perfecting itself under the leadership of the Communist Party. It must build up and perfect the systems of all types and levels of schools gradually enabling each citizen to receive a lifelong education from the womb to tomb, so as to develop better than ever all the intellectual resources of the population. Such a system should include both the formal and informal institutions of education. It should include the whole school system plus adult schools, correspondent schools, and other kinds of part-time schools and seasonal institutes, vocational training classes in service staff training

institutes and self-study circles or organizations, whole-day schools, half-day schools and part-time classes.

10. Finally, the most important and fundamental task is to completely implement the recently passed 'compulsory educational law' as soon as possible (a nine-year fundamental education), to reform the structure of secondary education, enabling the graduates of all types of secondary schools to have a chance in entering higher education institutions, establishing various tiers and types of colleges and universities, as a testament or show-window of superiority of socialist education.[18]

IV Most Important Theoretical and Practical Problems of Education Finally Posed during the Debate, Demanding Earnest Inquiry and Solution

In Sep. 1983, Teng Hsiaoping wrote a motto for the Beijing Jing Shan Experimental School is now well-known in the country as the 'Three Facings', namely 'Facing modernization, Facing the world and Facing the Future'. Later, educational workers and teachers all over the country entered into further and deeper discussion on the essence of education and other questions basing upon the 'Three Facings'. They posed several most and important theoretical and practical questions confronted by contemporary China as follows:

1. The question of guiding ideas for socialist education in China. All mentioned that the whole educational enterprise must be carried on the basis of the China's realities mentioned above. We must recognize the facts of uneven development of political economy and culture and the like. Education in different regions must have different demands and standards. We should pay attention to the 'key' regions and 'key' schools, so as to raise the general level of education gradually from point to plane, guarding against the

practice of 'Straight Cutting', which means moving at the same pace. Education must move forward wave by wave, more effectively and rapidly towards the target of producing more and more and ever better talented manpower for the 'Four Modernizations'.

2. The question of adjusting education to the needs of economic reconstruction. All mentioned that our past educational system failed to link education with labor market, personnel system, the leading cadre system, wage and salary schedules, so we must find the solution of this problem by reforming the structure of the educational system. First of all we must change the structure of secondary education by expending the system of professional or vocational-technical schools, so as to enable secondary school graduates to get employment and to raise the cultural and technical level of the workers and functionaries in all sectors of societies. The reform of higher education structure must pay special attention to the proportional establishment of majors or specialities needed by the developing economy, changing the past practice of emphasizing science and technology and neglecting liberal arts, commence and law. We must also adjust the proportion of higher talented graduates to the needs of 'Four Modernizations'.

3. The question of universalizing the nine-year's compulsory education. This kind of education fulfils the task of ushering the unlettered human being into civilized society, much like feeding a hungry population with the first bowls of rice. How to relate it to the realities of China is a problem deserving serious and further research.

4. The question of greatly expanding adult education.

Socialist education should pay much more attention than any other sociey on adult education. We must pay much attention to the education of workers

and peasants by setting up various types and levels of schools.

5. The problem of putting more effort on the research in theoretical problems. The situation of Chinese educational research today is generally deemed unsatisfactory. Researchers in educational theory have not yet discovered all the objective laws of the educational and teaching process. There are many shortcomings and omissions in present-day textbooks on education. Some of them have not shown closer logical relationship between the various areas of pedagogy. The experiences of outstanding expert teachers and administrators have not been well summerized and the laws of educational activities are not well reflected. We have not yet evolved a coherent theory of pedagogy for guiding the teacher's practice[19]. To put great effort into the research work in theoretical questions in one of the most pressing problems today.

V A Brief Analysis and Comment on Some Theoretical and Practical Problems Referred During the Debate

It has been more than 30 years since the founding of New China. Serious and comprehensive research in theoretical problems of education has never been undertaken owing to the hindrance of mistaken policies, and especially the ultra-leftist ideas. During the 'Cultural Revolution', owing to the interference of Linpiao and Jiangqing counterrevolutionary clique the situation was catastrophic. Many departments of education in colleges and universities stopped functioning, many research institutions were disbanded, research workers were dismissed and reassigned, and majority of professional educators were forced to change their work. Linpiao and Jiangqing counter-revolutionary clique under the banner of revolution in culture, falsified Marxist-Leninist educational thoughts, and widely spread idealistic

metaphysical fallacies, for example, 'politics is everything' 'Class struggle is a primary course', 'The more one has knowledge the more one is reactionary', 'Booklearning is useless'. Intellectuals were defamed and despised. They exalted as heroes the pupils who got zeros in an examination, and highly praised one pupil in an elementary school who attacked and criticized her teachers. They completely denied the achievements of education during the 17 years since the founding of New China. They negated all the objective laws of education followed by educators at that time. Whatever they did was directly in opposition to the laws. This destroyed the whole educational enterprise of our country[20]. As a result of this we can find few competent research workers in the field of educational theory and it is difficult to find immediate successors. Theoretical ideas remained of one time muddled without knowing what was right and what was wrong. After the down-fall of lin-piao and Jiangqing counterrevolutionary clique, the Communist Party reaffirmed the principle of 'seeking fruth from facts' and 'practice is the sole criterion of testifying truth'. The fallacies of educational ideas have now been thoroughly exposed and criticized. Now the whole educational Community in China all acclaim that we must learn education according to the objective laws of education. All agree that, besides reviving the objective laws negated in the past, we must go on to discover new ones. It was on this background that this debate on the essence of education took place. This is my first view point.

Secondly, by means of exploring the relations outside education and those within it, we have gradually been clear as to the particular contradictions within education itself, the laws of its development and the role of Chinese education is the socialist revolution of construction. Such exploration has shown theoretical and practical significance in formulating correct educational policies, deciding upon correct educational objectives, reconstructing and perfecting our educational system and pushing on the practice of educational reforms. In recent years, through its educational authorities our government has taken many important measures in reforming and developing socialist educational enterprise. For example, it has explicitly announced education as one of the strategical keys in developing national economy; earnestly taken various measures in raising the social political and economic status of teachers; endeavored to mobilize the initiative of all sectors of society to promote education; and continuously increased investments in education. It should be pointed out that, the resolution concerning the reform of educational set-up promulgated by the

Central Commission of the Chinese Communist Party in 1985 clearly showed the effects of this debate. Moreover, this debate has greatly tempered a multitude of theoretical workers in education, raised their level of theoretical thinking, livened their research activities, and raised their self-consciousness in combining theory with practice and concerning for investigating important educational problems in the service of socialist modernization.

However, this debate was not free of shortcomings.

First, attention was mainly focused on the relations outside education and little was done on the relations within education itself. For example, with regard to the aim of training the educant, there is no general agreement on the complex relations existing among the moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor objectives. Emphasis was often shifted from one objective to the other. At one time 'intellectual is primary', and at other times 'the moral objective is first', etc. During this debate, we did not delve deeper into this problem. On the theoretical front, the relationship among these five objectives in an all-round developed person were still not thoroughly recognized. In a word, we have not come to a final conclusion about how we shall train citizens with the 'Four Having's', namely having high ideals, having moral conduct, having culture, having disciplined habits; and 'Three Contributions', namely contributions to the people, to his motherland and to the mankind.

The second shortcoming is that insufficient attention was paid to the fulfilment of two widely circulated sayings: 'Utilization of the foreign ideas for China'. For example, Chinese ideas were listed first in Professor Ulich's 'Three Thousand years of Education wisdom'. As to the aim, content and methodology of education, we have had a rich tradition of good ideas since Confucious. During this debate, only a few individuals and publications touched upon learning from the past, so this important aspect has generally been neglected. Ever since professor John Dewey lectured in China in 1919, his books and disciples had influenced China a great deal until the recommending of Coviet pedagogy, such as that of Kairov and others. Recently, various authors such as Conant, Skinner and Bruner, etc. have been widely read. However, during this debate we did not discuss and compare all these ideas for the benefit of building up a new theory of education for the use of modern China as well as the modern world.

Thirdly, during this debate, in exposing the essence of education,

the wordings used were not free from in abstract terms and the habit of labeling in political terms. We are far from achieving a bonafide 'science of education', which seems to be a distant goal all over the world!

Reference Note

1 See 'Brief Information about Educational Research Agencies in All China', compiled by CIER, 1984

2 See the volume of 'Education' of the Great China Encyclopedia, 1985 edition, p.169

3 See 2, p.169

4 'An Outline of Developing the Science of Education, 1978-1985' (draft) p.5

5 See 2, p.167

6 See 2, p.167

7 See Minister He Dongchang's report at the 2nd National Science's Planning Conference, 9 April 1983

8 See 'Collection of writtings concerning the Great Debate, the Essence of Education', the 'Editor's Comment', 1980

9 See 'Essential Professional Knowledge for Cadres', a gist collection, compiled and published by Electrical Industry Press, 1984, p.280-281

10 See 8, p.48-56

11 See 8, p.57-60

12 See 8, p.80-89

13 See 8, p.103-118

14 See acticle 'Education as a Process of Socializing the Individual', in 'Educational Research Monthly', No.6, 1982; also see article 'The

Function of the Education and Education as a Commodity', in 'Educational Research Monthly', No.12, 1986

15 See 'A First Course of Education, a TV Textbook' edited by Ronald Y.S. Cheng, for the Hupei provincial TV university, published by Hupei People's Press, 1985, p.9

16 See 'Abridged Chinese Educational Statistics of the Last Thirty Years', compiled by the Plan and Finance Department of the Ministry of Education, 1980

17 See 'The Educational Statistical Data of China, 1985' compiled by the Plan and Finance Department of State Education Commission, 1986

18 See article 'Education', writted by Dong Chun-cai and others, published in the volume of 'Education' of the Great China Encyclopedia, 1985 edition, p.10-14

19 See article 'Several Questions about the Educational Scientific Research', published in the magazine 'Dispatches of Educational Scientific Research' compiled by the Jilin Provincial Society for the Study of Education, No.3, 1980

20 See Liu Fonian's article 'The Search for Laws of Pedagogy in China During the Past Thirty Years' published in the magazine 'Educational Research Monthly' April, 1979, p.38